



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# RACE TO THE TOP ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

CATEGORY B:  
HIGH SCHOOL  
COURSE ASSESSMENT  
PROGRAM



Selection Criteria			
<b>(B)(1) Consortium Governance</b>	Available	Ranges	Score
<p>The extent to which the consortium's proposed governance structure will enable the successful design, development, and implementation of the proposed high school course assessment program. In determining the extent to which the consortium's proposed governance structure will enable the successful design, development, and implementation of the proposed assessment program, we will consider—</p> <p>(a) The consortium's vision, goals, role, and key deliverables (<i>e.g.</i>, assessments, scoring and moderation system, certification system, professional development activities), and the consistency of these with the consortium's theory of action;</p> <p>(b) The consortium's structure and operations, including—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The organizational structure of the consortium and the differentiated roles that a member State may hold (<i>e.g.</i>, lead State, governing State (as defined in the NIA), advisory State);</li> <li>(ii) For each differentiated role, the rights and responsibilities (including the level of commitment to adopting and implementing the assessment program) associated with the role;</li> <li>(iii) The consortium's method and process (<i>e.g.</i>, consensus, majority) for making different types of decisions (<i>e.g.</i>, policy, operational);</li> <li>(iv) The protocols by which the consortium will operate, including the protocols for member States to change roles or leave the consortium and for new member States to join the consortium;</li> <li>(v) The key policies and definitions to which all member States will adhere, the rationale for choosing these policies and definitions, and the consortium's plan (including the process and timeline) for developing them; and</li> <li>(vi) The consortium's plan for managing funds received under this grant category;</li> </ul> <p>(c) The terms and conditions of the Memoranda of Understanding or other binding agreements executed by each member State, including the consistency of the terms and conditions with the consortium's governance structure and the State's role in the consortium; and</p> <p>(d) The consortium's procurement process, and evidence of each member State's commitment to that process.</p>	30	L: 0-8 M: 9-21 H: 22-30	

<b>(B)(2) Theory of Action</b>	Available	Ranges	Score
<p>The extent to which the eligible applicant's theory of action is logical, coherent, and credible, and will result in improved academic outcomes for high school students across the States in the consortium. In determining the extent to which the theory of action has these attributes, we will consider the description of and rationale for—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) How the proposed high school course assessment program will be incorporated into a coherent high school educational system (<i>i.e.</i>, a system that includes standards, assessments, curriculum, instruction, and professional development);</li> <li>(b) How the assessment program's rigor will be demonstrated and maintained over time;</li> <li>(c) How the assessment program will cover diverse course offerings that provide a variety of pathways to students; and</li> <li>(d) How the assessment program will be implemented at a scale that, across the States in the consortium, increases access to rigorous courses for students who have not typically had such access, and broadly improves student achievement and college and career readiness (as defined in the NIA).</li> </ul>	5	L: 0-1 M: 2-3 H: 4-5	

<b>(B)(3) Course Assessment Program Design and Development</b>	Available	Ranges	Score
<p>The extent to which the design and development of the eligible applicant's proposed high school assessment program is feasible, scalable, and consistent with the theory of action. In determining the extent to which the design has these attributes, we will consider—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The high school courses for which the consortium will implement assessments; the rationale for selecting those courses, including a need to increase access to rigorous courses for students who have not typically had such access; and the processes by which new high school course assessments will be added to the assessment program over time and existing course assessments will be updated and refreshed;</li> <li>(b) How the assessments will measure student knowledge and skills against standards from a common set of college- and career-ready standards (as defined in the NIA) in subjects for which such a set of standards exists, or otherwise against State or other rigorous standards;</li> <li>(c) How the consortium will certify the rigor of each assessment in the assessment program, whether the assessment is new or adapted; and how the consortium will maintain consistent and high levels of rigor over time; and</li> </ul>	60	L: 0-15 M: 16-44 H: 45-60	

<p>(d) The general design and development approach for course assessments, including—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The number and types of components (e.g., mid-term tests, through-course summative assessments (as defined in the NIA), end-of-course assessments) in a high school course assessment;</li> <li>(ii) The extent to which, and, where applicable, the approach for ensuring that, assessment items will be varied and elicit complex student demonstrations or applications of knowledge and skills;</li> <li>(iii) How the assessments will produce student achievement data (as defined in the NIA) and student growth data (as defined in the NIA);</li> <li>(iv) The approach and strategy for ensuring scalable, accurate, and consistent scoring of assessments, and the extent to which teachers are trained and involved in the scoring of assessments; and</li> <li>(v) How the course assessments will be accessible to the broadest possible range of students, including English learners and students with disabilities, and include appropriate accommodations (as defined in the NIA) for students with disabilities and English learners.</li> </ul>			
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<b>(B)(4) Research and Evaluation</b>	Available	Ranges	Score
<p>The extent to which the eligible applicant's research and evaluation plan will ensure that the assessments developed are valid, reliable, and fair for their intended purposes and for all students. In determining the extent to which the research and evaluation plan has these attributes, we will consider—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The plan for verifying validity, reliability, and fairness; and</li> <li>(b) The plan for determining whether the assessments are being implemented as designed and the theory of action is being realized, including whether the intended effects on students and schools are being achieved.</li> </ul>	25	L: 0-7 M: 8-18 H: 19-25	

<b>(B)(5) Course Assessment Program Implementation</b>	Available	Ranges	Score
<p>The extent to which the eligible applicant's plan for implementing the proposed high school course assessment program will result in increased student enrollment in courses in the assessment program (and therefore improved student academic outcomes) in each member State. In determining the extent to which the implementation plan has these attributes, we will consider—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The approach to be used in each member State for promoting participation in the high school course assessment program by high schools, by teachers, and by students (<i>e.g.</i>, voluntary participation, mandatory participation, incentive programs); the plan for implementing the approach, including goals, major activities, timelines, and entities responsible for execution; and the expected participation level in each member State and across the consortium overall, including—</li> </ul>	45	L: 0-11 M: 12-33 H: 34-45	

<p>(i) The number and percentage of high schools expected to implement at least one of the assessments in the high school course assessment program in each of five consecutive years beginning with the 2013-2014 school year;</p> <p>(ii) For each assessment in the assessment program, the number and percentage of high schools expected to implement the assessment in each of five consecutive years beginning with the 2013-2014 school year; and</p> <p>(iii) The unduplicated number and percentage of high school students expected to take at least one assessment in the assessment program in each of five consecutive years beginning with the 2013-2014 school year; and</p> <p>(b) The plan for supporting teachers and administrators in implementing the high school course assessment program and for developing, in an ongoing manner, the professional capacity to use the assessments and results to inform and improve instructional practice.</p>			
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<b>(B)(6) Project Management</b>	<b>Available</b>	<b>Ranges</b>	<b>Score</b>
<p>The extent to which the eligible applicant's project management plan will result in implementation of the proposed high school course assessment program on time, within budget, and in a manner that is financially sustainable over time. In determining the extent to which the project management plan has these attributes, we will consider—</p> <p>(a) The quality, qualifications, and role of the project management partner, as evidenced by its mission, date of founding, size, experience (including past success in implementing similar projects), and key personnel assigned to this project (including their names, curricula vitae, roles, percent of time dedicated to this project, and experience in managing similar projects);</p> <p>(b) The project workplan and timeline, including, for each key deliverable (<i>e.g.</i>, assessments, scoring and moderation system, certification system, professional development activities), the major milestones, deadlines, and entities responsible for execution;</p> <p>(c) The extent to which the eligible applicant's budget—</p> <p>(i) Is adequate to support the development of a high school assessment program that meets the requirements of the absolute priority;</p> <p>(ii) Includes costs that are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the proposed project and the number of students to be served; and</p> <p>(d) For each member State, the estimated costs for the ongoing administration, maintenance, and enhancement of operational assessments in the proposed assessment program and a plan for how the State will fund the assessment program over time (including by allocating to the assessment program funds for existing State or local assessments that will be replaced by assessments in the program).</p>	35	<p>L: 0-9</p> <p>M: 10-25</p> <p>H: 26-35</p>	

<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1: Focus on Preparing Students for Study in STEM-Related Fields</b>	Available	Score
<p>The Department gives 10 competitive preference points to applications that include a high-quality plan to develop, within the grant period and with input from one or more four-year degree-granting IHEs, assessments for high school courses that comprise a rigorous course of study that is designed to prepare high school students for postsecondary study and careers in the STEM fields, including technology and engineering. Any such course of study may include cross-cutting or interdisciplinary STEM courses (<i>e.g.</i>, computer science, information technology, bioengineering) and be designed to address the needs of underrepresented groups.</p> <p>An eligible applicant addressing this priority must, in addition to addressing the priority throughout the application narrative, provide a separate plan that describes—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The courses for which assessments will be developed;</li> <li>(b) How the courses comprise a rigorous course of study that is designed to prepare high school students for postsecondary study and careers in the STEM fields; and</li> <li>(c) How input from one or more four-year degree-granting IHEs will be obtained in developing assessments for the courses.</li> </ul> <p>We will award points to eligible applicants addressing this priority on an “all or nothing” basis (<i>i.e.</i>, 10 points or zero points). An eligible applicant may not use the same course of study to address both this priority and Competitive Preference Priority 2 (Focus on Career Readiness and Placement).</p>	0 or 10	

<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Focus on Career Readiness and Placement</b>	Available	Score
<p>The Department gives 10 competitive preference points to applications that include a high-quality plan to develop, within the grant period and with relevant business community participation and support, assessments for high school courses that comprise a rigorous course of study in career and technical education that is designed to prepare high school students for success on technical certification examinations or for postsecondary education or employment.</p> <p>An eligible applicant addressing this priority must, in addition to addressing the priority throughout the application narrative, provide a separate plan that describes—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The courses for which assessments will be developed;</li> <li>(b) How the courses comprise a rigorous course of study in career and technical education that is designed to prepare high school students for success on technical certification examinations or for</li> </ul>	0 or 10	

<p>postsecondary education or employment; and</p> <p>(c) How relevant business community participation and support will be obtained in developing assessments for the courses.</p> <p>We will award points to eligible applicants addressing this priority on an “all or nothing” basis (i.e., 10 points or zero points). An eligible applicant may not use the same course of study to address both this priority and Competitive Preference Priority 1 (Focus on Preparing Students for Study and Careers in STEM-Related Fields).</p>		
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<b>Absolute Priority: High School Course Assessment Programs</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	
<p>Under this priority, the Department supports the development of new or adapted assessments for high school courses that will be used by multiple States and are valid, reliable, and fair for their intended purposes and students. To meet this absolute priority, an eligible applicant must demonstrate in its application that it will develop and implement a high school course assessment program that—</p> <p>(a) For each course in the assessment program—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Measures student knowledge and skills against standards from a common set of college- and career-ready standards (as defined in the NIA) in subjects for which such a set of standards exists, or otherwise against State or other rigorous standards;</li> <li>(ii) As appropriate, elicits complex student demonstrations or applications of knowledge and skills;</li> <li>(iii) Produces student achievement data (as defined in the NIA) and student growth data (as defined in the NIA) over a full academic year or course that can be used to inform— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Determinations of individual principal and teacher effectiveness and development and support needs; and</li> <li>(B) Teaching, learning, and program improvement; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>(iv) Is designed to assess the broadest possible range of students, including English learners (as defined in the NIA) and students with disabilities (as defined in the NIA);</li> </ul> <p>(b) Includes assessments for multiple courses that will be implemented in each member State at a scale that will enable significant improvements in student achievement outcomes statewide; and</p> <p>(c) Includes a process for certifying the rigor of each assessment in the assessment program and for ensuring that assessments of courses covering similar content have common expectations for rigor.</p>		

<b>Budgets</b>		
<p>Budgets and budget narratives should provide a detailed description of how the applicant plans to use their Federal grant funds, and how they plan to leverage other Federal, State, or philanthropic funds toward the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed High School Course Assessment Programs Assessment System.</p>		

## DEFINITIONS

Accommodations means changes in the administration of an assessment, including but not limited to changes in assessment setting, scheduling, timing, presentation format, response mode, and combinations of these changes, that do not change the construct intended to be measured by the assessment or the meaning of the resulting scores. Accommodations must be used for equity in assessment and not provide advantage to students eligible to receive them.

Achievement standard means the level of student achievement on summative assessments that indicates that (a) for the final high school summative assessments in mathematics or English language arts, a student is college- and career-ready (as defined in the NIA); or (b) for summative assessments in mathematics or English language arts at a grade level other than the final high school summative assessments, a student is on track to being college- and career-ready (as defined in the NIA). An achievement standard must be determined using empirical evidence over time.

College- and career-ready (or readiness) means, with respect to a student, that the student is prepared for success, without remediation, in credit-bearing entry-level courses in an IHE (as defined in section 101(a) of the HEA), as demonstrated by an assessment score that meets or exceeds the achievement standard (as defined in the NIA) for the final high school summative assessment in mathematics or English language arts.

Common set of college- and career-ready standards means a set of academic content standards for grades K-12 that (a) define what a student must know and be able to do at each grade level; (b) if mastered, would ensure that the student is college- and career-ready (as defined in the NIA) by the time of high school graduation; and (c) are substantially identical across all States in a consortium. A State may supplement the common set of college- and career-ready standards with additional content standards, provided that the additional standards do not comprise more than 15 percent of the State's total standards for that content area.

Direct matriculation student means a student who entered college as a freshman within two years of graduating from high school.

English learner means a student who is an English learner as that term is defined by the consortium. The consortium must define the term in a manner that is uniform across member States and consistent with section 9101(25) of the ESEA.

Governing State means a State that (a) is a member of only one consortium applying for a grant in the competition category, (b) has an active role in policy decision-making for the consortium, and (c) is committed to using the assessment system or program developed by the consortium.

Level 1 budget module means a budget module for which an eligible applicant is seeking funds under the Comprehensive Assessment Systems grant category that (a) is necessary to delivering operational summative assessments in both mathematics and English language arts no later than school year 2014-2015, or (b) is otherwise necessary to the eligible applicant's proposed project and consistent with the eligible applicant's theory of action.

Level 2 budget module means any budget module for which an eligible applicant is seeking funds under the Comprehensive Assessment Systems grant category other than a Level 1 budget module. An eligible applicant must prioritize Level 2 budget modules in the order of importance to the implementation of the proposed project.

Moderation system means a system for ensuring that human scoring of complex item types, such as extended responses or performance tasks, is accurate, consistent across schools and States, and fair to all students.

On track to being college- and career-ready<sup>[1]</sup> means, with respect to a student, that the student is performing at or above grade level such that the student will be college- and career-ready (as defined in the NIA) by the time of high school graduation, as demonstrated by an assessment score that meets or exceeds the achievement standard (as defined in the NIA) for the student's grade level on a summative assessment in mathematics or English language arts.

Performance level descriptor means a statement or description of a set of knowledge and skills exemplifying a level of performance associated with a standard.

Student achievement data means data regarding an individual student's mastery of tested content standards. Student achievement data from summative assessment components must be reported in a way that can be reliably aggregated across multiple students at the subgroup, classroom, school, LEA, and State levels.

Student growth data means data regarding the change in student achievement data (as defined in the NIA) between two or more points in time. Student growth data from summative assessment components must be reported in a way that can be reliably aggregated across multiple students at the subgroup, classroom, school, LEA, and State levels and over a full academic year or course.

Student with a disability means, for purposes of this competition, a student who has been identified as a student with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as amended (IDEA), except for a student with a disability who is eligible to participate in alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards consistent with 34 CFR 200.6(a)(2).

Through-course summative assessment means an assessment system component or set of assessment system components that is administered periodically during the academic year. A student's results from through-course summative assessments must be combined to produce the student's total summative assessment score for that academic year.

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<sup>[1]</sup> The term on track to being college- and career-ready is used in place of the term "proficiency" that is used in section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA.